

MARK E. GREEN, M.D.

7TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

2446 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-2811

305 PUBLIC SQUARE
SUITE 212
FRANKLIN, TN 37064
(629) 223-6050

128 N. SECOND STREET
SUITE 104
CLARKSVILLE, TN 37040
(931) 266-4483

April 10, 2023

Shou Zi Chew
CEO, TikTok
5800 Bristol Parkway
Culver City, CA 90230

Mr. Shou Zi Chew:

As Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security with responsibilities to protect America's cyber border, I write to you seeking answers regarding TikTok's source code and its ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

I watched with great interest the House Committee on Energy & Commerce hearing on March 23, 2023, titled "TikTok: How Congress Can Safeguard American Data Privacy And Protect Children From Online Harms." This critical hearing held by Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers demonstrated the grave concerns that Members of Congress and the American people have with TikTok.

My colleagues did a fantastic job pointing out their concerns, such as TikTok's promotion of content that is harmful to children, lack of concrete efforts to safeguard privacy, and use of the app by the PRC regime to spy on American citizens. As Chair Rodgers said, "We do not trust TikTok will ever embrace American values—values for freedom, human rights, and innovation...TikTok has repeatedly chosen the path for more control, more surveillance, and more manipulation." I could not agree with her more, and I commend her leadership on this issue.

Let me be clear: this is not a partisan issue. TikTok's ties to the CCP regime are of grave concern to lawmakers of both parties as well as the Administration. FBI Director Christopher Wray has said that ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, is controlled by the PRC. And the Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines has said that TikTok is "collecting foreign data to then use it to target audiences for information campaigns." When asked if parents should be worried, Haines responded, "I think you should be."

I applaud Chair Rodgers for holding this hearing. However, there were a few questions I had hoped Members would ask that were not. Please answer the following questions within seven days:

- 1) Where is TikTok's source code developed?
- 2) Does anyone in China have access to the source code?

- 3) If there is need to patch or update the source code, where does that new code get written?
- 4) Can you guarantee, if the source code or the updates are written in China, there are no “back doors” written into the code, or any updates to the code that would allow China access to the servers housing Americans’ data?

If I do not receive an answer, please understand the urgency of this issue to securing the American homeland may require us to compel your testimony by subpoena. Understanding that written communications to Congress bear the same weight of law as does testifying in person under oath, I hope your answers will be truthful. Please answer via written response by April 17, 2023.

Congress and the American people deserve answers. If you have any questions, you can reach my office at (202) 225-2811 or email Jay.Kronzer@mail.house.gov. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Green". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark E. Green, MD
Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security